

the received forms of beauty of every bygone style of Art, without one single attempt to produce an Art in harmony with our present wants and means of production—the carver in stone, the worker in metal, the weaver and the painter, borrowing from each other, and alternately misapplying the forms peculiarly appropriate to each—there were to be found in isolated collections at the four corners of the transepts all the principles, all the unity, all the truth, for which we had looked elsewhere in vain, and this because we were amongst a people practising an art which had grown up with their civilisation, and strengthened with their growth. United by a common faith, their art had necessarily a common expression, this expression varying in each according to the influence to which each nation was subject. The Tunisian still retaining the art of the Moors, who created the Alhambra; the Turk exhibiting the same art, but modified by the character of the mixed population over which they rule; the Indian uniting the severe forms of Arabian art with the graces of Persian refinement.

All the laws of the distribution of form which we have already observed in the Arabian and Moresque Ornament are equally to be found in the productions of India. From the highest work of embroidery, or most elaborate work of the loom, to the constructing and decorating of a child's toy or earthen vessel, we find everywhere at work the same guiding principles,—there is always the same care for the general form, the same absence of all excrescences or superfluous ornament; we find nothing that has been added without purpose, nor that could be removed without disadvantage. The same division and subdivision of their general lines, which form the charms of Moresque ornament, is equally to be found here; the difference which creates the style is not one of principle, but of individual expression. In the Indian style ornaments are somewhat more flowing and less conventionalised, and have, doubtless, been more subjected to direct Persian influence.

The ornaments on Plate XLIX., are chiefly taken from Hookhas, of which there was an immense variety exhibited in 1851, and all remarkable for great elegance of outline, and for such a judicious treatment of the surface decoration that every ornament tended to further develop the general form.

It will be seen that there are two kinds of ornament,—the one strictly architectural and conventional: such as Nos. 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, which are treated as diagrams; and the other, such as Nos. 13, 14, 15, in which a more direct imitation of nature is attempted: these latter are to us very valuable lessons, showing how unnecessary it is for any work of decoration to more than indicate the general idea of a flower. The ingenious way in which the full-blown flower is shown in No. 15, in three positions in Nos. 14 and 15, the folding back of the leaf in No. 20, are very suggestive. The intention of the artist is fully expressed by means as simple as elegant. The unity of the surface of the object decorated is not destroyed, as it would be by the European method of making the flower as near like a natural flower as possible, with its own light and shade and shadow, tempting you to pluck it from the surface. On the Persian, Plate XLVII., will be seen a similar treatment of natural flowers; the comparison shows how much of Persian influence there is in this floral style of India.

In the application of the various ornaments to the different portions of the objects the greatest judgment is always shown. The ornament is invariably in perfect scale with the position it occupies; on the narrow necks of the Hookhas are the small pendent flowers, the swelling forms of the base are occupied by the larger patterns; at the lower edge, again, appear ornaments having an upward tendency, and, at the same time, forming a continuous line round the form to prevent the eye running out of it. Whenever narrow flowing borders are used, as in No. 24, they are contrasted by others with lines flowing in an opposite direction; the general repose of the decoration is never for a moment lost sight of.

In the equal distribution of the surface ornament over the grounds, the Indians exhibit an instinct

and perfection of drawing perfectly marvellous. The ornament No. 1, on Plate L., from an embroidered saddle-cloth, excited universal admiration in 1851. The exact balance obtained by the gold embroidery on the green and red grounds, was so perfect that it was beyond the power of a European hand to copy it with the same complete balance of form and colour. The way in which the colours are fused in all their woven fabrics, so as to obtain what they always appear to seek, viz., that coloured objects when viewed at a distance should present a neutralised bloom, is very remarkable. A due regard to economy in the production of our Plates has necessarily limited the number of printings, and we have not always therefore been able to obtain the proper balance of colour. The Indian collection at South Kensington Museum should be visited and studied by all in any way connected with the production of woven fabrics. In this collection will be found the most brilliant colours perfectly harmonised—it is impossible to find there a discord. All the examples show the nicest adjustment of the massing of the ornament to the colour of the ground; every colour or tint from the palest and most delicate to the deepest and richest shades, receiving just the amount of ornament that it is adapted to bear.

The following general rules, which are applicable to all woven fabrics, may be observed:—

1. When gold ornaments are used on a coloured ground, where gold is used in large masses, there the ground is darkest. Where the gold is used more thinly, there the ground is lighter and more delicate.
2. When a gold ornament alone is used on a coloured ground, the colour of the ground is carried into it by ornaments or hatchings worked in the ground-colours on the gold itself.
3. When ornaments in one colour are on a ground of a contrasting colour, the ornament is separated from the ground by an edging of a lighter colour, to prevent all harshness of contrast.
4. When, on the contrary, ornaments in a colour are on a gold ground, the ornaments are separated from the gold ground by an edging of a darker colour, to prevent the gold overpowering the ornament.—See No. 10, Plate L.
5. In other cases, where varieties of colour are used on a coloured ground, a general outline of gold, of silver, or of white or yellow silk, separates the ornament from the ground, giving a general tone throughout.

The carpets and low-toned combinations of colour, a black general outline is used for this purpose.

The object always appears to be, in the woven fabrics especially, that each ornament should be softly, not harshly, defined; that coloured objects viewed at a distance should present a neutralised bloom; that each step nearer should exhibit fresh beauties; and a close inspection, the means whereby these effects are produced.

In this they do but carry out the same principles of surface decoration which we find in the architecture of the Arabs and Moors. The spandril of a Moorish arch, and an Indian shawl, are constructed precisely on the same principles.

The ornament on Plate LIII., from a book-cover at the India House, is a very brilliant example of painted decoration. The general proportions of the leading lines of the pattern, the skilful distribution of the flowers over the surface, and, notwithstanding the intricacy, the perfect continuity of the lines of the stalks, place it far before any European effort of this class. On the inside of the same cover, Plate LIV., the ornaments are less conventional in their treatment; but how charmingly is observed the limit of the treatment of flowers on a flat surface! This book-cover offers in itself a specimen of two marked styles, the outside Plate LIII., being after the Arabian manner, and the inside after the Persian.